

**PRAGMATIC FEATURES OF SELECTED CONSUMER PRODUCTS’
ADVERTISEMENTS IN NIGERIAN PRINT MEDIA**

BY

AGBA, OREVAOGHENE

Matric no.: 16PBC01390

**A DISSERTATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND GENERAL
STUDIES, SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES,
COVENANT UNIVERSITY, OTA, OGUN STATE**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF
THE DEGREE OF MASTERS’ (M. A.) IN ENGLISH**

MAY, 2018

DECLARATION

I, Agba Orevaoghene, declare that this research titled “Pragmatic Features of Selected Consumer Products’ Advertisements in Nigerian Print Media” was undertaken by me under the supervision of Professor Rotimi Taiwo in the Department of Languages and General Studies, Covenant University. The research project has not been presented, either wholly or partly for any degree elsewhere before. The sources of scholarly information and all the opinions of others used in this project have been duly acknowledged.

.....

Agba, Orevaoghene

CERTIFICATION

I certify that this research was carried out by Orevaoghene Agba of the Department of Languages and General Studies, Covenant University. I approve this research as adequate in scope and quality for the partial fulfillment of the award of Masters' of Art degree in English Language, Covenant University.

PROF. ROTIMI TAIWO
Supervisor

Signature & Date

DR. TUESDAY OWOEYE
Head of department

Signature & Date

External examiner

Signature & Date

DEDICATION

To the memory of my late father, Mr. S. U. Agba Ojile, who always believed in my ability to be successful academically and encouraged me to begin this journey, but sadly could not live to see this programme completed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My profound gratitude goes to the Almighty God whose grace has kept and given me the strength and enablement to complete this programme. Also, I wish to express my indebtedness to my admirable supervisor and mentor, Prof. Rotimi Taiwo, for his patience, time, understanding, words of advice, and constant motivation. Additionally, I want to appreciate the Head of Department of languages, Dr. S. T. Owoeye and my superb lecturers, Prof. C. Awonuga, Prof. C. Ogbulogo, Prof. T. Abioye, Prof. I. Chiluwa, Prof. Arua E. Arua (University of Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana), Dr. E. Uba and Dr. E. Ajiboye who have also been sources of motivation for academic excellence.

I also want to express my unreserved gratitude to my late dad, Mr. S. U. Agba who was always concerned about my welfare in Covenant University. God bless his soul. To my mom, Mrs. C. O. Agba, I am deeply grateful to her for the constant affection and support she gave all through this programme. I also wish to appreciate my sister, Uyoyoghene Ogundipe, who encouraged me both in exemplary ways to be up and doing. I am thankful to my brothers, Ajiri, Ewoma and Zino for their care and encouragement. I also wish to acknowledge the efforts of my brother in-love, Mr. Olakunle Ogundipe, for his concern for my academic progress, for always being available to assist in possible ways, and for never failing to give good answers to my endless questions.

Also worthy of mention are my wonderful friends, Vivian O. Enomate, Augustina A. Omonogie, Maryjane Ataiwrehe, Ejiro Onogure, Sunday I., and Isaac ‘Black’ U. for supporting my academic progress. Also, to Oreoluwa ‘Oreo Adeyummie’ A., I am grateful for being ever supportive; Mrs. Anakpoha ‘Lady Gaga’ for her love; Mr. I. A. Oyewole for his constant prayers; and Dr. E. J. Amodu (Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria) for making his M.A. thesis and PhD dissertation available without delay when requested for, and for his support ever since then. To Oluwasegunota Ajayi, my virtual friend, I am thankful for helping out with some Yoruba – English translations and explanations. I appreciate my wonderful course mate, Mrs. A. Feyisitan, for being a fabulous friend and also her cousin, Mr. Olaitan Omoya for his hospitality in Canaan land towards us especially during examination periods. I also wish to acknowledge the rest of my course mates, Mrs. E. I. Ugoji, Miss Sharon Offiong and Miss Adeola Muritala, for making this programme an interesting one. God bless you all.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS	PAGE
Title Page	i
Declaration	ii
Certification	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Tables	xi
Appendix	xii
Abstract	xiii

CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the research problem	4
1.3 Research Questions	5
1.4 Aim and Objectives of Study	5
1.5 Scope of the Study	6
1.6 Justification of Research	7
1.7 Organisation of Work	7
1.8 Definition of Terms	8

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Pragmatics: An Overview	10
2.2 Context and Pragmatics	13
2.3 Deixis	15
2.3.1 Person/Personal Deixis	17
2.3.2 Spatial/Place Deixis	17
2.3.3 Temporal/Time Deixis	17
2.3.4 Discourse (or Text) Deixis	18
2.3.5 Empathetic Deixis	18
2.3.6 Social Deixis	18
2.4 Context and Indexical Meaning	18
2.5 Presupposition	21
2.5.1 Existential Presupposition	23
2.5.2 Factive Presupposition	23
2.5.3 Lexical Presupposition	23
2.5.4 Structural Presupposition	23
2.5.5 Non-Factive Presupposition	23
2.5.6 Counterfactive Presupposition	23
2.6 Advertising	24
2.6.1 Importance of Advertising	25
2.6.2 Types of Advertisements	29
2.7 Language Use in Advertising	31
2.7.1 Context and Advertisements in Nigeria	34

2.7.2 Deixis and Advertisements in Nigeria	34
2.7.3 Presupposition and the Language of Advertising	35
2.8 Review of Empirical Studies on Advertising	36
CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK/ METHODOLOGY	
3.1 Theoretical Framework	42
3.1.1 Speech Acts Theory	42
3.1.1.1 Austin's Speech Act Theory	43
3.1.1.2 Searle's Speech Acts Theory	46
3.1.3 Felicity Conditions	46
3.1.3.1 Preparatory Conditions	48
3.1.3.2 Condition for Execution	48
3.1.3.3 Sincerity Condition	48
3.1.4 Speech Acts and Advertising in Nigeria	49
3.2 Grice's Maxims of Conversational Cooperation	49
3.2.1 Implicature	52
3.2.2 Cooperative Principles and Advertisements in Nigeria	53
3.3 Research Design	55
3.4 Sources and Procedure for Data Collection	55
3.5 Procedure for Data Analysis	56
CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA	
4.1 Speech Acts	57

4.1.1 Representative Acts	57
4.1.1.1 Assertions/claims	57
4.1.1.2 Boasting/Bragging	59
4.1.1.3 Describing	60
4.1.2 Directive Acts	62
4.1.3 Commissive Acts	64
4.1.3.1 Promises/dares	64
4.1.3.2 Offers	65
4.1.4 Expressive Acts	66
4.1.5 Multiple Speech Acts	66
4.1.6 Indirect Speech Acts	68
4.2 Cooperative Principles	69
4.2.1 Maxim of Quantity	69
4.2.2 Maxim of Manner	70
4.2.3 Maxim of Quality and Relevance	72
4.2.4 Implicature	74
4.3 Presupposition and Deixis	77
4.3.1 Presupposition	77
4.3.1.1 Lexical Presuppositions	77
4.3.1.2 Factive and Counterfactive Presuppositions	80
4.3.1.3 Existential Presuppositions	81

4.3.1 Deixis	82
4.3.1.1 First Person Deixis	82
4.3.1.2 Second Person Deixis	83
4.3.2.2 Temporal/time Deixis	85
4.4 Context	86
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
5.1 Summary	94
5.2 Findings	94
5.3 Conclusion	96
5.4 Contribution to Knowledge	96
5.5 Recommendations	97
5.6 Limitations of the study	97
5.7 Suggestions for Further research	97
References	98
Appendix	106

LIST OF TABLES

FIGURE	PAGE
Table 1 Selected Newspapers and their Frequencies in the Data	56
Table 2 Multiple Speech Acts	67
Table 3 Definite Names as Existential Presupposition	81
Table 4 Socio-cultural Specific Lexemes	87

APPENDIX

Lists of Sampled Data

106

ABSTRACT

Advertising has become a norm in the society today as it surrounds us daily. Its importance cannot be overemphasised as it can make or mar a product in the market. In crafting advert messages, language is largely relied on. For best results, copywriters add some form of creativity in their use of language and some features of pragmatics are largely exploited. However, aspects of pragmatics like deixis and the role of context in advertisements, have not received adequate attention in Nigerian print food & beverages advertisements. Thus the aim of the study was to investigate some of these basic pragmatic features and how they are used by copywriters in crafting consumer products' advertisements in Nigerian Print Media. A total number of eighty food & beverages advertisements selected from four Nigerian daily newspapers namely *The Punch*, *Vanguard*, *The Nation* and *Daily Trust*, published between 2013 to September 2017 were qualitatively analysed focusing on specific pragmatic features such as speech acts, cooperative principles and implicature, presupposition, deixis, and context. The results showed that copywriters made adequate use of presupposition, deixis, and speech acts as persuasive strategies to coax the target audience to purchase the advertised products thereby fulfilling the goals of advertising. The cooperative maxims however were largely disobeyed because they did not give advertisers room to express themselves to their satisfaction. Copywriters also made use of context-specific lexemes to appeal to target customers mentally and emotionally. Focusing analysis only on the written part of the advertisements was a limitation as pictures may also be used to communicate meaning. It was suggested that advertisements published during festive periods and other types of consumer products' advertisements should be studied focusing on the same pragmatic features. Amongst others, it was recommended that Advertisers should continue to structure their advertisements based on the socio-cultural context of Nigeria, and they should do so more often as it is also a way of promoting the Nigerian English that reflects our cultural and social values.